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CPYRGHT

GI's Story of Cuba Flight 'For the CIA'

Austin, Tex.

A Federal court jury yesterday began weighing a Korean War hero's story that he went on an Alaska-to-Florida bad check spree to prepare for a role as a Central Intelligence Agency agent in Cuba.

The case of Sergeant Bobby Joe Keesee of Amarillo, Tex., went to the jury of 11 men and one woman at 4:50 p.m. Keesee was charged with interstate transportation of a stolen car. It was part of a cross-country trip he said was meant to give him a reason to ask political asylum in Cuba.

Keesee, winner of the Bronze Star, three Korean battle stars, the Good Conduct Medal, and holder of the Purple Heart, testified he flew two men to Cuba last March. He said he believed he was doing it for the CIA.

CAR

Keesee's lawyers said their client thought the rented car he was charged with stealing and his bad checks were taken care of by the CIA.

United States District Attorney Ernest Morgan argued that even the CIA cannot tell someone to engage in crime.

The jury deliberated only a few minutes, then recessed until 9 a.m. today.

The count was the first of 152 Federal charges filed against the 28-year-old AWOL soldier after he flew a stolen airplane to Cuba on March 23.

Keesee, his short, stocky frame crowded into a gray civilian suit, admitted writing "50 or 60" bad checks while driving the rented car across the country.

COVER

He said he was acting on instructions from a person he identified as "Buddy Carson," an agent for the CIA. Keesee said Carson told him he would get \$1200 a month for the Cuban flight and the months of preparation for it. The crime spree was to establish his claim for asylum in Cuba in case he was caught, he said.

Keesee said he rented a light plane in Albuquerque, N.M., and flew Carson and a Cuban named "Jose" to a spot east of Havana where the pair parachuted from the plane.

Cuban fighter planes forced to land, Keesee said, and he asked for political asylum. He said the Castro government questioned him for 49 days, then returned him by commercial airliner to Miami, Fla.

Keesee stoutly maintained under cross-examination that he was acting for the CIA. He refused to acknowledge the prosecution's contention that Carson never existed. He claimed his witnesses had been "sent overseas" to keep them from testifying.

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